

August 3, 2010

French, U.S. Navy celebrate 10 years of E-2C excellence



NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. -- Members of the E-2/C-2 Program Office (PMA-231) French Foreign Military Sales team joined the French Flotilla 4F E-2C squadron July 2 in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the squadron stand-up in Lorient, France.

"The 10 years we celebrate today are marked by a return on investment, which exceeds the small size of the squadron," said Rear Adm. Bobin, the French chief of naval aviation.

Bobin said the Hawkeye is a symbol of the French and U.S. Navy's relationship that is constantly maintained by the naval flight officer exchange program and pilot training at Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE TWO ZERO (VAW-120), based in Naval Station Norfolk, Va.; combined operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere."

John Beaulieu, PMA-231 French FMS lead, seconded Bobin's sentiments and noted the importance of E-2 capabilities.

"These are volatile times where threats take many forms. It is in times like these that air superiority, fluid command and

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control, and extraordinary battlespace management are truly paramount,” said Beaulieu. “Whether flying the drapeau tricolore, or the stars and stripes, the E-2 is able to support missions in fleets all over the world. We are proud of our partnership, capabilities and our proven interoperability.”

The French and American E-2s have successfully completed numerous cross-deck operations with U.S. carriers and the F.S. Charles de Gaulle. The first of these operations took place May 23, 2001, when a VAW-124 E-2 left the USS Enterprise and landed on the French carrier.

A theme of collaboration and mutual cooperation, not just between the U.S. and France, but also with other international partners, was apparent throughout the ceremony.

“All of the improvements to the French Hawkeyes have been presented to the international community at the International Hawkeye Conferences,” said Rear Adm. Stephane Verwaerde, French chief of staff, plans and programs. “Some have been developed, not only in complete transparency with our partners in the U.S. Navy, but with their support and equipment. These improvements are available for export, and our policy is to encourage industrial partnerships with other FMS clients, either directly or through the U.S. Navy.”

The French, like the U.S. Navy, are looking to the future of E-2 capabilities. “We are particularly interested in the technological choices made by our American friends in the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye,” said Verwaerde.

The Foreign Military Sales team affirmed their commitment to France now and into that future. “The E-2 answers the call whenever needed and has proved that it can assist in our efforts, and the efforts of our partnering nations, to continually adapt its mission and become a global force for good,” said Beaulieu. “That is why the E-2 program office and its Foreign Military Sales team are dedicated to providing strategy, logistics and sustainment solutions in support of the mission.”

The French concluded the celebration by echoing the message of continued dedication and alignment.

“The 4F has written the first ten years of the Hawkeye’s history in French Naval Aviation, whose 100 years we celebrate this year,” said Verwaerde. “It is, however, just one chapter in the long story of our two nations, tied by the ocean, our aircraft carriers and Naval Aviation.”

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Cutlines:

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0042: A French navy band plays in front of one of four of the Flotilla 4F E-2C Hawkeyes proceeding the ceremony marking the squadron's 10th anniversary July 2 in Lorient, France.

0055: Adm. Bobin, French chief of naval aviation and Rear Adm. Verwaerde, French deputy chief of staff, plans and programmes, review the troops during a celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the French E-2C squadron, Flotilla 4F July 2 in Lorient, France.

0070: The U.S. Navy's French Foreign Military Sales team in front of a French E-2C Hawkeye at the 10th Anniversary ceremony for Flotilla 4F, the French E-2C squadron, July 2 in Lorient, France.



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